

Free, Yet Costing Everything

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References: Mark 10, Mark 10:17-22; Mark 8:36

The Encounter on the Road

This story, though, there's no power, there's no miracles that are done. It was just a miracle of the wisdom of the Servant of the Lord probing the heart of a man that had everything, but felt there was something missing.

I'd like you to turn with me to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, and we'll read from verse 17. The main lesson here today is that eternal life is free, but it costs everything you have. That's the main lesson today. Verse 17:

[Mark 10:17-22 NKJV]

¹⁷ Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

¹⁸ So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Do not defraud," "Honor your father and your mother."

²⁰ And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

²¹ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

²² But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

The main lesson: eternal life is free, but it costs everything you have.

It's a story about a man who had everything this world had to offer. He had riches; he had youth—that's important; and he had power or a position in society. But we can see him coming to the Lord Jesus, running and kneeling. He recognized there was something yet that was missing with all his advantages in life. He was a man of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a man of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was—thought there must be something he needed to know or something he needed to do in order to obtain what he felt was missing.

In verse 17, we read that the position now that the Lord Jesus is in, he says that He was going out on the road. The position now in the timeline was that He was heading down the Jordan Valley, leaving Galilee, going to be traveling down the Jordan Valley, through Jericho, and then up to Jerusalem, where He was going to go and die upon the cross. It was His final days here on earth. He was on the road to the cross, and it was the time of year of Passover. And there were many then that were collecting together from various towns and villages and cities and regions in Galilee, and they were all converging on this one road that went down to Jericho to go up to Jerusalem.

When this young man then appears, seeing Jesus, he runs and kneels before Him. The point is, this was a very public meeting with the Lord Jesus, with all the pilgrims that were going up to the feast.

Now, Mark doesn't tell us that he was young; Matthew does. Luke also says that he was a ruler. That is, at his young age, he had a prominent position. He must have been a very intelligent and active young man. He had a place in society, and with wealth—independently wealth—and he was yet young. Was there anything that this world could offer him that could add to what he had? He had everything: great abilities, resources, and he was young.

But he was sensitive enough to realize there was something missing, something in his very heart that he was not completely satisfied. Now, it wasn't a casual encounter. It says he ran when he saw Jesus. And not only that, he knelt down before Him. He took a position of one who had a need to One who he thought might be able to complete that need, to help him in his need. It shows not only his great desire, his inward desire, but his earnestness, and he acted upon it.

I long to see in the world more people with that kind of earnestness about seeking out the truth. That was one of the reasons why I believe the Lord Jesus loved this young man: he really wanted to know what his problems were.

Probing the Heart

Now notice there also his address of the Savior, how he speaks to the Lord Jesus. He says in verse 17, "Good Teacher." Now, obviously he recognized the goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He didn't just say "Teacher"; he said, "Good Teacher." There was something good about Jesus that he recognized.

Now, Jesus doesn't enter into a theological discussion with him. He didn't say, as He did with Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, you've got to be born again," you see. You know, He took a different approach, did He not? The Lord Jesus here, His wisdom is demonstrated so beautifully to this young man. His message was completely tailored or fitted to the position and the personality of this young man. With the woman at the well, you see an entirely different approach. He probes her heart and reveals to her her emptiness, her need of that living water. With this young man, it's something else.

—Thank you.

That woman at the well had nothing; this young man had everything. The Lord uses a different approach. The wisdom of God is incomprehensible, and it's displayed here in the brief conversation that He has with this young man. Very soon He puts His finger on his problem.

Now, if He is a good teacher, you'd think that the young man then would be prepared to do whatever He said—that he would immediately listen to what Jesus said and do it. But we read that he went away sad. There was a bigger problem here in his heart than he understood there to be. He presumably only recognized Him as a teacher, not as God Himself.

There's only One who is good, and that's God. If he had really thought that Jesus was good—"Only One is good," the Lord says there in verse 18: "So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One, that is, God.'" So if he had recognized Him as good, then, only God being good, he would have to admit that Jesus was God. That's the first thing that He does: He elevates his argument there to make the young man look up a bit higher than his own—own heart, his own heart's need—to point out that God is the One who could meet his need. So He gives him a brief pull away from his own thoughts, you might say.

The Second Table of the Law

So notice the question: "What must I do?" He says in verse 17, "What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?" That's the question. Now, what he's doing is he's putting himself under

the law. The law says, "This do, and you shall live." So he thought there was something that he could do that he might be able to fill this need that was in his heart. I don't know what he might have thought that he could do; I don't think he knew. There's a big question there.

He had tried to keep the law his entire life, as we'll find out. He was a very morally upright young man. His dealings with his fellow man was flawless, as far as he could tell in his own eyes. But there was still something that ached in his heart that could not be filled by what he could do. But he still asked, was there something else that I could do to inherit eternal life? He wasn't sure if he had that life.

So Jesus, verse 19, He states what the law actually reads. He says to the young man, "You know the commandments." You've gone over them and over them and over them: "Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud."

He uses a different word. The Lord Jesus twists the word around a little bit to make it more sharper. The word that He changes there is covet. He said, "You shall not covet," the law says. But He uses the word defraud. Very interesting. Okay.

He didn't pick up on that right away, the young man. He says, "I've done all this since I was young." There are two tables of the law. The first table is a table of our relationship and our dealings with God, and it's summarized by the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength." And the other table of the law shows our relationship to man, which is just read here. So the table of the second—the second table was, "Thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself."

Defraud: The True Cost of Covetousness

Now the Lord changes the word covet to defraud. Why? Why? Because it's going to pierce right into the very heart of this man. He replaces it because this young man had a covetous heart when he did not realize it. He was blinded to that. Covetousness is idolatry. It's setting up some material thing in our hearts before the living God; that's covetousness. And covetousness is one of the most prevalent sins of mankind—covetousness.

Now the Lord uses the word defraud. Why? Why? Because in a sense, by being covetous and being selfish, he was hoarding his wealth for himself, and he was defrauding his poor neighbors. And he didn't realize it. That's why He used the word defraud—because he was keeping his own resources and not giving it to his neighbor who needed it, and therefore breaking the commandment, "Thou shalt love your neighbor as yourself."

Verse 20, he doesn't realize it. He says, "Teacher, all these things I've kept from my youth." The sharp, pointed message that Jesus gave did not reach his heart. Why? Materialism has a

deadening effect upon the soul. It sets up a barrier to the real life within. The grasping for things becomes blinding to the soul, and he couldn't see that he was defrauding his neighbor: "All these things I've kept from my youth."

Now the Lord loved him, it says there, verse 21: looking at him, He loved him. He loved his earnestness; He loved his uprightness. When the Lord used the word defraud, he took it as he had never cheated anyone. When he had gone to pay taxes, he had paid the full amount. He was careful to make sure that he paid the temple tax. When he bought or sold anything, he gave full measure, and he gave full measure of money. He defrauded, he cheated no one—as far as he was concerned. But he still had a hole in his heart; he was not satisfied.

So the Lord says to him—looked at him, loved him, said to him—"One thing you lack." I think his ear must have come up and listened very carefully to what Jesus said: "At last, I get the answer to my problem." But it was not to his benefit at all, because he refused it.

He said, "Go, go your way."

I want you to go home. I want you to cash all your bonds. I want you to empty your bank account. I want you to sell all the properties that you have acquired. I want you to put on auction all the articles of your home and sell all your fine clothes. He said, I want you to accumulate that money, and I want you to take it outside the city walls where there's lepers out there, where there's those that are poor, the widows that sometimes pray at the temple. I want you to make sure that each one of them has food and lodging and clothing. I want you to distribute that money to the poor.

But He says, you'll have not only eternal life, you'll have treasure in heaven. Every penny that you give to the poor will be added to your account in heaven and multiplied. And then He says, "Come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

Weighing on the Scale

At that point, the young man looked at the Lord Jesus: a Man that didn't know where He was going to sleep that night or a meal that He was going to have. He looked at a travel-stained, wearied Man that had spent the last three and a half years crisscrossing that country, preaching in every town and village, not having a moment to Himself. And the lines of the pressures on that Man's face of the life that He had, as He had borne His cross, and now He was by the last few steps—He was going to lay down His life.

The young man made an assessment. He put it all on scales. All that he had accumulated as a young man, all his hopes and dreams, the properties, the position—and he was still young—on one scale. And then eternal life in the future, far distant future. What was the glories of

that? He couldn't quite see it. He was a little bit blinded to it because of the weight of his possessions.

And slowly the scale drifted down and down. He had been confronted with the truth. He made his decision: he turned away. It was too much; the cost was too much. And he was very sorrowful. He felt it deeply. But he wanted to enjoy the wealth while he had his youth. He had important engagements. He had things to do that were more important than to take up his cross and to follow this Man who was going to give everything for him.

The things of this world, this material world, it can blind us and not be able to see our own poverty.

[Mark 8:36 NKJV]

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Put that on the scale. Everything that we have, that we want, even that which we think we're going to have—our dreams and hope and aspirations, the things that we want to acquire—there's only **one** thing that's important: that's your eternal soul. Let that weight of your eternal well-being be the deciding factor when you're going to be able to live your life. Put it on the scale. What shall a man give in exchange for his—nothing? There is nothing that can give peace.

Free, Yet Costing Everything

The main lesson again, I repeat it, as I did at the beginning: eternal life is free, but it costs everything we have. In order to receive a gift, you need to have your hands emptied. In order to receive Christ, there can be no barriers. An open heart, free of the grasping of the material things, is necessary. Won't you truly receive Christ today? That's the question put before you for this.

The young man went away sorrowful. My hope for that young man is that when he got home and he looked at things, he said, "Those fine clothes in my closet, they haven't filled the hole. The position that I'm called to tonight in the Sanhedrin, in a meeting with important men—sitting there with them hasn't filled the hole. What did the Savior say? 'Take up your cross. Become nothing.' I'm going to do it."

My hope is that young man, although he went away sorrowful, did not stay away, but instead, with the pilgrims, went up to Jerusalem and perhaps witnessed for himself the death of the

Savior and the victorious cry upon the cross, "It is finished"—the work of redemption, souls released, the way paved for an eternity in heaven.

May the Lord answer the need of your heart today as the Spirit of God has been speaking to you.

Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank You that You made every provision for man. The Lord Jesus came, the One who was poor, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His impoverishment might be enriched—riches of heaven. Oh Father, help us that there's someone here today weighing it upon the scale, the scale of their heart. We pray, Lord, they may see the value of their souls and the value of the work of Christ, and with an open hand receive Your salvation, we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.